



Substitute Senate Bill No. 183

Public Act No. 16-190

AN ACT CONCERNING THE PROGRAM OF FAMILY ASSESSMENT RESPONSE.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

Section 1. Subsection (g) of section 17a-101g of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*):

(g) (1) Notwithstanding the provisions of subsections (a) to (f), inclusive, of this section, the commissioner may establish a program of family assessment response to reports of child abuse and neglect whereby the report may be referred to appropriate community providers for family assessment and services without an investigation or at any time during an investigation, provided there has been an initial safety assessment of the circumstances of a family and child and criminal background checks have been performed on all adults involved in the report. Services provided through family assessment response shall include an array of community-based services and supports designed to meet the individual needs of families, build upon their strengths, enhance child development, reduce child abuse and neglect and increase the health, safety and well-being of children.

(2) In response to an accepted family assessment report, the

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department shall conduct a comprehensive family assessment that shall include a safety and risk assessment and an assessment of family strengths and needs. Such assessment shall include personal interviews with the child and the child's parent or primary caretaker, an evaluation of the home environment and the performance of criminal background checks on all adults residing in the same household. Such assessment may include, as appropriate, personal interviews with other children or adults residing in the same household as well as any other caregivers, family members and collateral contacts. In conducting such assessment, the department shall consider the age and vulnerability of the child, family functioning, family history of abuse and neglect and family history of involvement with the department. The department shall, upon securing any necessary releases, request any relevant out-of-state history of child abuse or neglect involving any adults residing in the same household.

(3) The following reports of suspected child abuse or neglect shall not be referred for family assessment response: (A) Sexual abuse, (B) abuse or neglect occurring in an out-of-home placement, (C) abuse or neglect resulting in the death or serious physical or mental injury of a child, or (D) where the department's safety assessment reveals that the child is unsafe. A case supervisor or manager shall approve all referrals to family assessment response.

(4) Prior to referring a report to an appropriate community provider, the department shall develop a service plan designed to meet the family's immediate needs for services and supports and to guide the community provider's development of a long-term plan of care for the family.

(5) Following a referral pursuant to subdivision (1) of this subsection, a community provider shall schedule an in-person meeting with the family and shall develop a plan of care. Such plan of care shall

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be developed in consultation with the family and shall include (A) a review of the department's family assessment and service plan and any services and supports the family is currently receiving, and (B) an identification of the family's ongoing needs and the services and supports that may be available to meet such needs. Such plan of care shall identify the family's strengths and needs and describe the services and supports to be offered to (i) address the family's needs, (ii) build upon the family's strengths, and (iii) increase the health, safety and well-being of the child. The provider shall monitor the family's participation and progress with the plan of care.

(6) The community provider shall maintain ongoing contact with the family through in-person meetings, visits to the home, child and family team meetings and phone calls. If at any time following the referral or during the implementation of the plan of care, the provider has reasonable cause to suspect or believe that any child under eighteen years of age (A) has been abused or neglected, as defined in section 46b-120, (B) has suffered a nonaccidental physical injury or an injury that is at variance with the history given for such injury, or (C) is placed at imminent risk of serious harm, the provider shall report or cause a report to be made in accordance with the provisions of sections 17a-101b to 17a-101d, inclusive.

(7) The community provider shall schedule an in-person meeting with the family prior to the end of services. The determination to end services shall be based upon the family's preference and progress in meeting the goals outlined in the plan of care. The community provider shall submit individual child and family specific data and administrative service data to the department not later than thirty days after ending services. Such data shall identify the needs of the family, the services and supports made available to address those needs, the family's met and unmet treatment goals, the final disposition at the time of ending services and the reasons for the family's discharge from

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services, including, but not limited to, met treatment goals, family relocation, the receipt of a new report by the department or transfer of the family to another provider.

(8) Subdivisions (5) to (7), inclusive, of this subsection shall apply to all community provider service contracts in effect on the effective date of this section to the extent they are not in conflict with such contracts, and shall apply to all contracts entered into, amended, extended or renewed on or after the effective date of this section.

~~[(2)]~~ (9) The commissioner ~~[may]~~ shall adopt procedures to establish a method for the department to monitor the progress of the child and family referred to a community provider pursuant to subdivision (1) of this subsection and to set standards for reopening an investigation pursuant to this section. Such standards shall include, but need not be limited to, provisions for the reassignment of a report referred for family assessment response for an immediate investigation based on (A) a reassessment of the initial report of child abuse or neglect or the discovery of new or additional facts indicating that the child is unsafe, or (B) a determination that the report meets the criteria of subdivision (3) of this subsection and, as a result, does not qualify for family assessment response. Not later than January 1, 2017, the commissioner shall submit a report regarding such procedures and standards, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a, to the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to children.

~~[(3)]~~ (10) Consistent with the provisions of section 17a-28, the department shall disclose all relevant information in its possession concerning the child and family, including prior child protection activity, to each provider to whom a report has been referred for use by the provider in the assessment, diagnosis and treatment of unique needs of the family and the prevention of future reports. Each provider who has received a report of child abuse or neglect referred pursuant

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to this subsection shall disclose to the department, consistent with the provisions of section 17a-28, all relevant information gathered during assessment, diagnosis and treatment of the child and family. The department may use such information solely to monitor and ensure the continued safety and well-being of the child or children.

(11) Not later than July 1, 2016, and annually thereafter, the department shall submit a report, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a, to the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to children for inclusion in the annual report card prepared pursuant to section 2-53m on the status of family assessment response. Such report shall include data from the previous calendar year, including, but not limited to: (A) The number of accepted reports of child abuse or neglect, and the percentage of reports assigned to the family assessment response track; (B) the disposition of families assigned a family assessment response; (C) for cases assigned to the family assessment response track, a breakdown by reporter type; (D) the number and percentage of family assessment response cases that changed track to investigations; (E) an analysis of the department's prior or subsequent involvement with a family that has been assigned to family assessment response, if applicable; (F) an analysis of the department's prior or subsequent involvement with a family that has been assigned to a community partner agency; (G) a description of services that are commonly provided to families referred to the community support for families program; (H) a description of the department's staff development and training practices relating to intake; (I) the number and percentage of referred families who were ultimately enrolled in the community support for families program; (J) the number and percentage of families receiving a family assessment response broken down by race and ethnicity; (K) the reason for discharge from the community support for families program, as identified in subdivision (7) of this subsection, broken down by race and ethnicity; and (L) a comparison of the needs identified and the

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needs addressed for families referred to the community support for families program.

Approved June 9, 2016